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AU NATUREL

NATURAL NUDES AWAY IN NATURE'S MAINE

About My Photography

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Away in Maine

I have spent much of the past over 25 years in Maine, and we have owned a home on an island in Penobscot Bay for over 16. My car has Maine license plates. We have made a down payment on my daughter's wedding on the island next year. When my neighbor, who can trace his family on the island back more than ten generations, saw the plates he said with a smile, "Another Year Around Summer Person From Away." There was a saving grace. He told me that I have been on the island long enough that I can now refer to weekly and weekend visitors as being "from away."

"From Away" is an important distinction in Maine. You will be treated warmly and with respect. The smiles that greet you everywhere will be genuine. "Locals" will take care of and care for you with precision and compassion. But you will never be "from here," you will not be let into their secrets – the best spots for lobster traps or the best maple tree for syrup taps; their loves, their jealousies, their feuds, and, most important, the absolute seriousness with which they go about making their livings and preparing to live through their long, bitter and often brutal winters.

In Issue 5 of Au Naturel, I presented 8 women who lived in Maine at the time we worked together. Some were "locals," some had moved to Maine to "experience life the way it should be," as the "Welcome to Maine" sign proudly announces on I-95. Each had the genuine warmth of the people of Maine, but in every session I could tell my creative partners were reserving something, and in each session there was also a look that said "winter is coming."

Here, in Natural Nudes Away in Nature's Maine, the sensibility is somewhat different. There is a real, unabashed joy in being nude outdoors in Maine for the first time. There is nothing held back, a sense of being freed; freed from what, again, it is not my place to know. But being nude in Maine was something different for each of these models, it was a new and apparently liberating experience and the images are very Au Naturel.

Jessamyne

Of the many models "From Away" with whom I have been privileged to work in Maine, none traveled further than Jessamyne, who found our Island all the way from Perth, Australia, via Los Angeles. Armed with a rented crossover van, a hatch full of clothes and costumes and a really good GPS, Jessamyne was making her way down the coast of Maine on her first visit to the East Coast, sightseeing and modeling as she traveled. The day we had scheduled for our session was everything we could want – puffs of clouds and contrails contrasting with the unique rich blues of the Maine sky, and a brilliant sun low in the sky, as is it should be the second week of October. But, then again, it was the second week in October, the warmth of summer was long past, we were beside waters which never warm to much over 50 degrees and a steady off the ocean wind known as a Sou'wester was always in our face.

Jessamyne was the very spirit of Australia – ready to pose despite the cold, bright, bold, confident, fun and funny, not to mention beautiful, with a spirit of adventure and a willingness to try almost anything, as long as her warming parka was just out of camera range.

As you will see in these images from the beach portion of our session, Jessamyne provides a wide range of emotions with which to work – but none of them look posed. She is direct one moment, coy the next; alone in her thoughts, engaged with her surroundings; playful, sensual, at rest and almost always on the move. Most of all, Jessamyne is always comfortable with herself, always comfortable being

—Au Naturel.

JESSAMYNE 1 — I AM JESSAMYNE, AWAY IN MAINE FROM AUSTRALIA

JESSAMYNE 2 — THE FIRST POSE OF THE DAY

JESSAMYNE 3 — IN THE COVE, UNDER A MAINE BLUE SKY

JESSAMYNE 4 — A MOMENT ALONE

JESSAMYNE 5 — AT REST WITH THE GLACIAL ERRATIC BOULDER

JESSAMYNE 6 — SUNSTRUCK SLEEP #1

JESSAMYNE 7 — SUNSTRUCK SLEEP #2

JESSAMYNE 8 — SUNSTRUCK SLEEP #3

JESSAMYNE 9 — SUNSTRUCK SLEEP #4

JESSAMYNE 10 — AS THE SUN SETS ON A DAY AWAY IN MAINE

Keira Grant

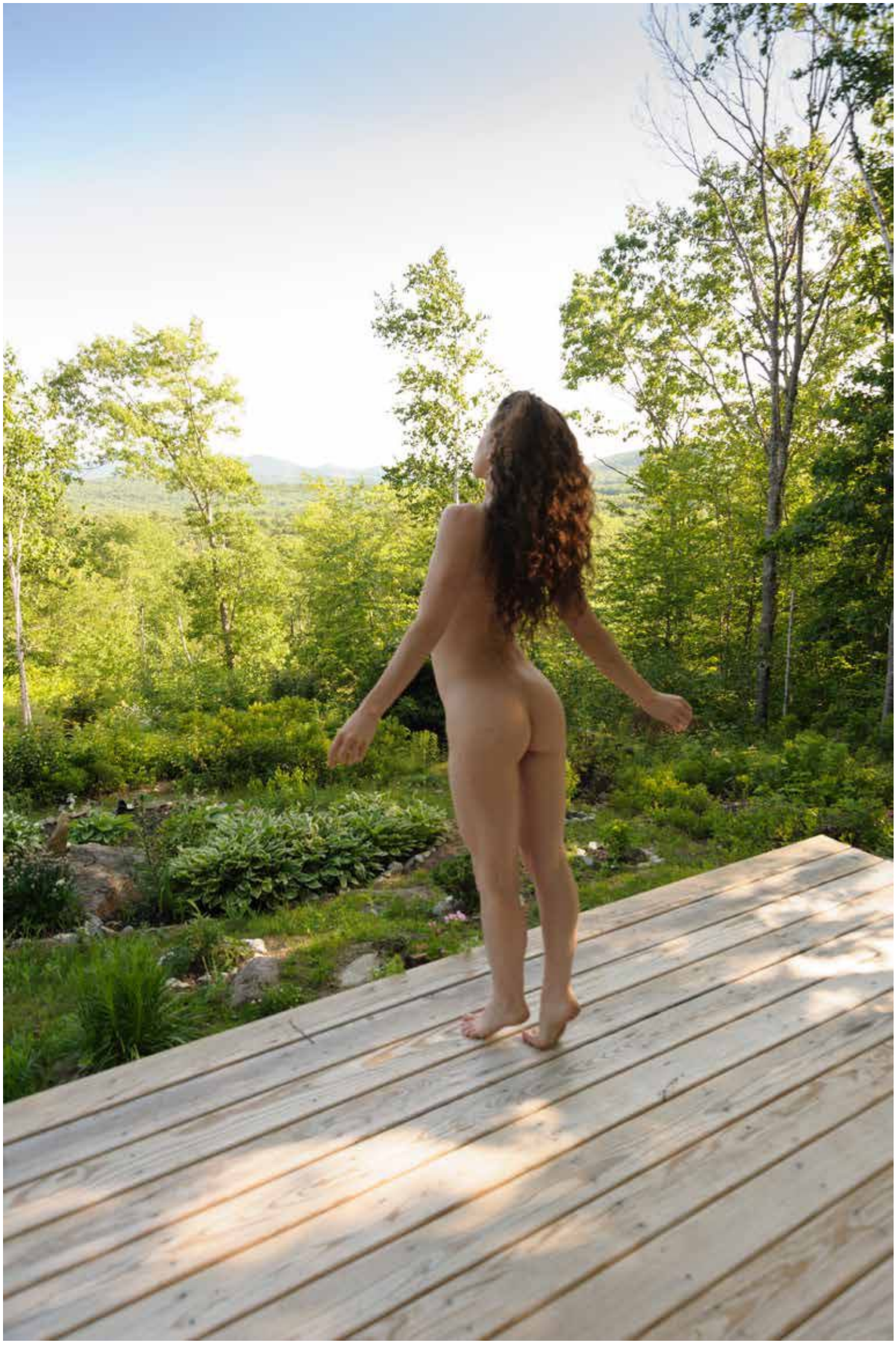
It was late June when I received a message from Keira, with whom I had worked twice before. "Hey! I'll be in Maine the first week of July and would love to work with you again. I've never been there before." Given that Keira seems to spend most of her modeling life traveling incessantly around the country, that she had never been to Maine amazed me. But it also gave me the idea to do an Au Naturel issue featuring woman "from away" (see the introduction to this issue to understand the unique to Maine meaning of that phrase).

We met at the mountain home at which Keira was staying and immediately decided, "This is the place." Stunning gardens, a wild woods, views to the mountains, an outdoor platform – it was perfect. And, as happens to be the case most summer afternoons in Maine, the light was also perfect – the intense sun and radiant blue skies filtered through maples, oaks, ash and endless varieties of pines and fir.

Keira may have been "from away" and on her first visit to Maine, but, as always, she is one of the most comfortable people I know with who and where she is. Very much au naturel, she walked me through the house and grounds as we settled on posing venues and set the times when the changing afternoon light would be at its most ideal for each idea we had. And, as usual when working with Keira, the best ideas were hers, including the witty and wonderful decision to hang herself by her incredible hair

Each image shows Keira's great comfort, her versatility, her incredible ability to take her great form and turn it into art. The more I work with her and the more I am around her great beauty, confidence and strength. I, too, become comfortable and the images become very Au Naturel. See another, very different side of Keira's visit to Maine in an upcoming issue of Au Naturel.

KEIRA GRANT 1 — I AM KEIRA GRANT, AWAY IN MAINE FROM AWAY



KEIRA GRANT 2 — LOOKING TO THE MOUNTAINS

KEIRA GRANT 3 — MAINE STRONG

KEIRA GRANT 4 — ALONE WITH HER THOUGHTS

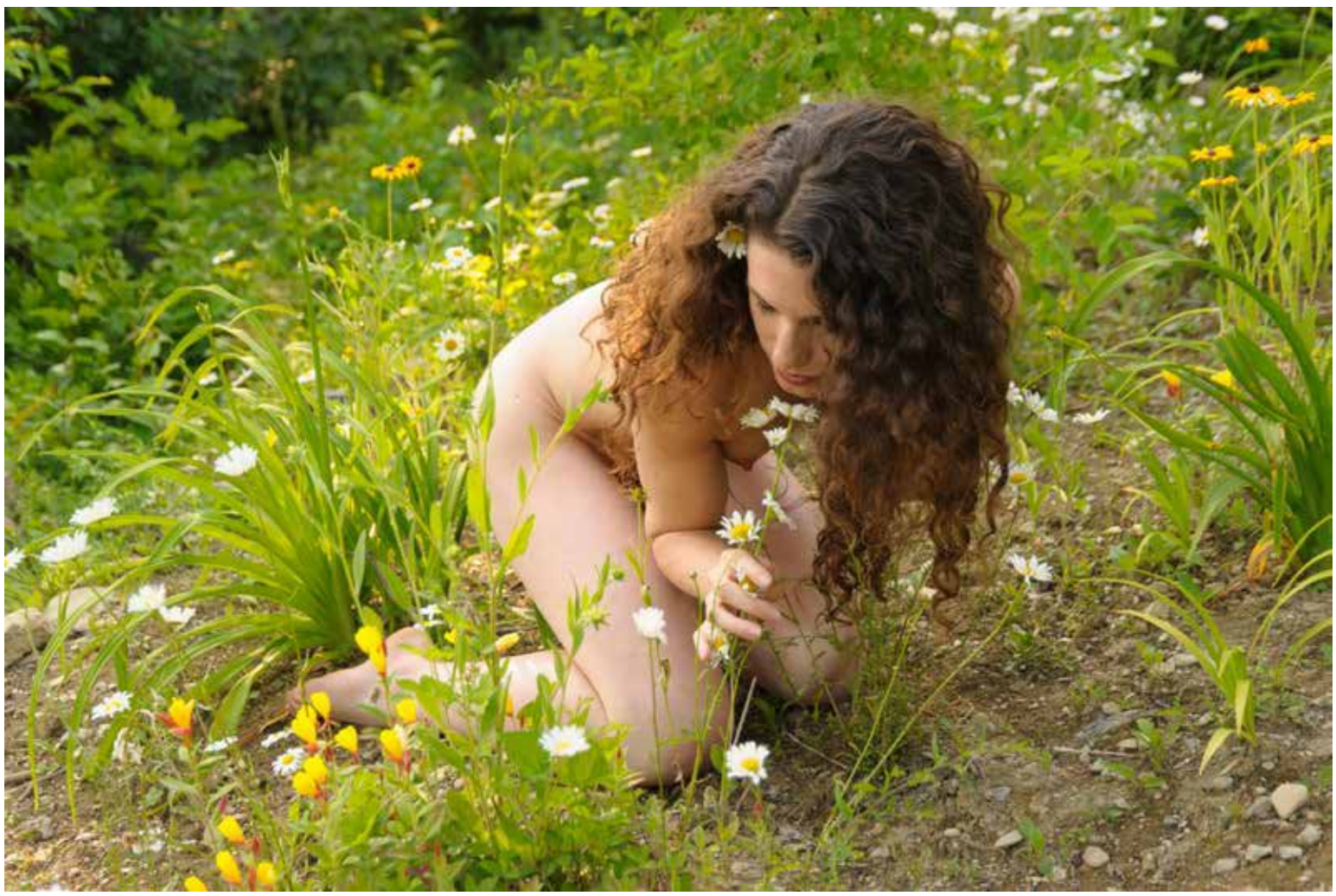
KEIRA GRANT 5 - CATCHING THE RAY OF THE SETTING SUN

KEIRA GRANT 6 — IN A MAINE GARDEN

KEIRA GRANT 7 — HANGING AROUND IN MAINE

KEIRA GRANT 8 — GIVE A WOMAN ENOUGH ROPE

KEIRA GRANT 9 — I CAN BE BOLD



KEIRA GRANT 10 — I CAN BE SOFT

KEIRA GRANT 11 —TREE HUGGER IN THE MAINE WOODS

KEIRA GRANT 12 — AT THE END OF THE SESSION AS THE SUN SETS, AWAY IN MAINE

Rebecca Lawrence

Our session in Maine in April 2015 was the fifth time I had the pleasure of creating images with the fabulous Rebecca Lawrence. You might ask, what "new" can you do with a model the fifth time you work with her? If you asked that question, you don't know Rebecca! She is inventive, daring, exciting and infinitely capable of taking her surroundings and turning them into platforms for incredible poses and looks. She proved it on her first visit away in Maine.

The morning she arrived on our island (on time, after an all night drive!), it was 48 degrees, the skies were gray, drizzles were breaking out and all she asked was to fix her makeup and grab a warm coat out of the trunk of her car. We headed first to a wrecked factory where we would at least have some cover in the event the skies didn't clear. It was there I met Rebecca the acrobat, who climbed fallen walls, hung from broken turbines and made a place in which she had never been a personal playground. You will see that part of the session in an upcoming issue of Au Naturel.

With a break in the drizzle, we headed out to the cove immediately behind the factory, and, once again, Rebecca made it her own, but with a complete change of artistic mood. She became a serious geometrician, shaping her body to the elements of the venue – a triangular derrick, a reflective stretch of water, a smoothly curved boulder.

From the factory, we headed to another cove, the Sand Beach, where we were very certain there would be no kids braving the frigid waters, not to mention the frigid air. And, Rebecca's luck, the sun came out and instinctively she knew how to capture the mood, even if the temperature rose only a few degrees.

It wasn't the day we expected or for which we had planned. Every venue was improvised, we were forever dodging raindrops, and about every half hour we had to duck into my car to warm up. The wind was harsh, the rocks rough, the sunlight sketchy. But Rebecca never flinched, always looked ahead and created a sensational day of images because she remained, as always Au Naturel.

REBECCA 1 — I AM REBECCA LAWRENCE, AWAY IN MAINE FROM THE REAL BROOK-LYN

REBECCA 10 — THINKING BACK ON A COLD SPRING DAY, AWAY IN MAINE

REBECCA 2 — DANCING WITH THE DERRICK

REBECCA 3 — ON REFLECTION

REBECCA 4 — FORM STUDY AWAITING THE SUN

REBECCA 5 — HEY! THE SUN'S OUT!

REBECCA 6 — CELEBRATING THE SUN ON A 48 DEGREE DAY

REBECCA 7 — AND SUNBASKING ON THAT COLD APRIL DAY

REBECCA 8 — A DARK ROCK IS A WARM PLACE ON A COLD DAY

REBECCA 9 — NOTHING BUT GRAY SKIES DO I SEE

Vera Juliette

About a year before Vera joined me Away in Maine, she and I were to work together in the woods along a river's headwaters in the Upper Hudson Valley. The day we had chosen turned out to be cold, rainy and altogether miserable. My studio was stark – black cloth backdrops and a black floor drop – and I had very few props for her to use, but Vera promised me she could make it work. The results are in Au Naturel #6 – Natural Nudes Sculpted Naturally. She brought light to an otherwise gloomy day.

We had no such concerns when Vera came to visit me on our island off the coast of Maine a few months ago. September, the locals will tell you, is always the best weather of the year – clear blue skies, a touch of color in the still fully leafed trees, light breezes (except, of course, when the occasional hurricane roars through), and a warm sun, low enough in the sky to cast golden light all afternoon long. I had also found the perfect venue, a cove into which I had never ventured before, facing the eastern reaches of Penobscot Bay, filled with both glacial erratic boulders and extrusions of the natural granite shelf that underlies most of the island, very private, and, very surprising, sufficiently shallow so that the water was comfortably warm in the afternoon sun.

Vera was nude before I could even get my cameras out of their bag, and when I was ready, she was already some distance away, walking the shoreline, dipping her toes into the bay and her feet into the primordial mud over which the tides washed since the last ice age carved the island's coast line. She asked how I would like her to pose and all I could think of was "just go." And, Vera did, finding rocks to climb, to lie against and on, to stand on statute like as she gazed out to sea. She danced in the mud, lay in the heaps of golden seaweed, warmed herself on granite shelves and, at the end of the day, washed herself in the still warm waters of the cove.

After her visit, Vera wrote, "My trip to Maine was incredible. I felt very connected to rocks and the ocean. Everything there made me feel good. Sam … captured my connection." Vera's connection and good feeling matched the Maine coast, very much Au Naturel.

VERA JULIETTE 1 — I AM VERA JULIETTE, ALONG PENOBSCOT BAY, AWAY IN MAINE

VERA JULIETTE 2 — SCOUTING THE LOCATION

VERA JULIETTE 3 — AS STRONG AS SHE CAN BE

VERA JULIETTE 4 — ROCK STUDY 1 - AT PLAY

VERA JULIETTE 5 — ROCK STUDY 2 — MAKING HERSELF COMFORTABLE

VERA JULIETTE 6 — ROCK STUDY 3 - VERA ON HER PLINTH

VERA JULIETTE 7 — TAKING A BREAK

VERA JULIETTE 8 — LYING IN THE WEEDS, OPENLY

VERA JULIETTE 9 — MUD DANCING

VERA JULIETTE 10 — DIRTY GIRL IN THE MAINE LATE SUMMER SUN

VERA JULIETTE 11 - REACHING FOR THE SUN

VERA JULIETTE 12 — CLEANING UP IN THE WATERS OF THE COVE

VERA JULIETTE 13 — SYSIPHUS VERA SEEKING TO TAKE HOME A MEMORY OF BEING AWAY IN MAINE

Sam David: Au Naturel

I call my work "Au Naturel." It does NOT mean only "nude" or "naked." It means in nature, in the simplest manner, without makeup or plumage. My work seeks to capture the emotional and physical implications of being nude in settings that are challenging and not without risk. I care as much about what a woman's face tells us about the experience as I do about her form and I hope that it shows in these images.

Whether the images were created outdoors in my favorite places or in my studios in Connecticut and Maine – my earliest partners in making beautiful images taught me to "let it come naturally." I do not "pose" the women with whom I am privileged to work, or ask that they do their hair or apply more than minimal makeup. I show them the place and the direction of the light, put some Vivaldi on the player and ask my partners to be who they want to be in the moment we are at. In the instants before and after they come to that point, that is when their true feelings are exposed and their beauty and emotions the most natural. Prints of most of my work are available through my website www.samdavidphotography.com or you may contact me for custom printing or to schedule a photographic session at sam.david.photo@gmail.com. Enjoy my work. Let it come naturally.

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